

listen to your heart (when he's calling for you) by clementinetea

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Forehead Kisses, Internalized Homophobia, M/M, Period-
Typical Homophobia, Pining, will is kind of sad and mike is really
sweet

Language: English

Characters: Dustin Henderson (mentioned), Lucas Sinclair
(mentioned), Mike Wheeler, Will Byers

Relationships: Will Byers/Mike Wheeler

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-12-11

Updated: 2017-12-11

Packaged: 2022-04-03 05:20:32

Rating: General Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,233

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Will feels like most everything is his fault, especially when Mike shows up at his house all scraped up.

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Author's Note:

for reference, this is set in between season 1 and 2;
so after will's disappearance but before the whole
ordeal with the mind flayer!

also there isn't a whole lot of description but if you're
made really squeamish by even the mention of it,
here's a tw for blood!

anyway, enjoy! <3

His drawing was all wrong.

Will erased furiously at the page. All his drawings were coming out wrong today, somehow, and he hadn't even started coloring yet. He brushed the eraser dust off the page, frustrated, and was just pressing the pencil lead to the paper again when someone rhythmically knocked at the door, three times.

Mike.

"Coming!" called Will, closing his sketchbook and setting it down on the couch; he was glad to have an excuse to leave it.

The boys had all been planning on meeting up at Mike's to continue their latest D&D campaign, but Lucas had something to do with his family, and Dustin hadn't been able to make it either, so in the end Mike had decided he would just come over to the Byers house for the afternoon.

Will wasn't complaining. The D&D mission was thrilling, certainly, but the more he thought about it, there was something just as thrilling in being alone with Mike that he couldn't quite pinpoint.

He walked down the hall to the front door, smiling a bit in anticipation at seeing his friend. If his heart picked up its pace, no one had to know.

"Hey," Mike greeted him when he opened the front door.

Will sucked in a shocked breath and gripped the doorknob tighter.

Mike stood on the doorstep, his bike tossed onto the patchy lawn of the yard behind him and a backpack slung across his shoulders. There was a scrape extending across his cheek, glistening with blood that was dark red and sticky-looking and hadn't dried up yet. His lip was bleeding too, and when he took his hand out of his pocket to brush his hair out of his eyes, there were fresh wounds dusted across his knuckles.

Will swallowed. "Mike."

"Yeah?"

"What happened?"

Mike looked down at his shoes and shrugged with an air of stiff, forced nonchalance. "It's fine, really. I, uh, ran into some kids from school. They were yelling at me about you and I yelled back and, well. Stuff happened."

"Oh," said Will. His voice wavered. "Oh, Mike."

Mike shrugged again. "Yeah."

Will shut his eyes and took a breath. "Come on in, we have to clean that."

Mike perched himself on the edge of the bathtub while Will wet a paper towel under the faucet. He had gotten taller in the last year, and he could practically stretch his legs all the way to the cabinets from there.

Will watched the water seep into the paper towel, watched the way it shook in his trembling hands. This was all his fault. All that had happened in the aftermath of his disappearance was that everyone else was in pain, and it was always because of him.

Mike sighed from behind him and ran the back of his hand over his

mouth to get rid of the blood that was there. "Will, I'm so sorry. I don't wanna ruin our whole day. I'm fine, really."

Will looked up at Mike incredulously in the bathroom mirror. Here he was, all scraped up and *he* was the one apologizing.

"You don't need to apologize. *I'm* sorry, Mike."

Mike blinked at him. His eyelashes were so, so long, Will noted with a hint of shame.

"Why are you apologizing? It's not like you made them beat me up," Mike pointed out.

"Yeah," Will said, turning to Mike and getting on his knees so he was at eye-level with him. "But you were defending me."

Will pressed the paper towel to Mike's cheek and softly, carefully pressed at the wound.

Mike hissed in pain and squeezed his eyes shut tightly. "I'd do it again any day," he said.

That was so typical of Mike it almost frustrated Will. *Don't*, he wanted to yell. *Don't waste your time on me. I don't deserve it.*

Mike opened his eyes, dark and understanding, and Will felt pinned down by his gaze. "Really," Mike said. "It was my choice to fight back. You're my best friend, and I won't let people say stuff like that."

Will sighed softly. "Everyone gets hurt because of me."

Mike reached up and put his hand right over Will's, where it was still holding the wet paper towel to Mike's cheek. Will's heart started racing, right on cue. "That's not true, Will, I promise. And friends don't lie."

They stayed like that, frozen, and Mike kept looking right into Will's eyes earnestly and his hand was still on top of Will's (which was beginning to get quite sweaty, in all honesty), and they were so, so close and if they stood like that for a little bit more Will felt like he could just lean over and maybe kiss Mike on the cheek like he'd

always wanted to (the one that wasn't scraped, of course) or maybe he could just kiss Mike, fit their mouths together in a real, actual kiss and it would be lovely but if he did everything would be ruined and, and—

"What'd the kids say?" Will said abruptly. His voice sounded shaky, he knew. He prayed Mike couldn't read minds.

"Oh, um. The usual, I guess. Zombie Boy and," he lowered his voice, "fag."

It was an ugly, ugly word, and Mike looked like he had swallowed something distasteful after his lips had formed it, his eyebrows knitting together in aversion, but Will wasn't surprised.

"They shouldn't say stuff like that," said Mike indignantly, bringing his hand back down to his side when Will said nothing.

"Yeah."

"They're wrong."

Were they? Will wasn't sure. He had more than just a sneaking suspicion that all the mean kids who had called him names (and Lonnie too, even) were right.

And he hadn't told anyone, but sometimes he felt like the Upside Down was right to take him. Like maybe he did belong there.

Mike stared him carefully for a few seconds and wordlessly opened his arms.

Will didn't let himself think or hesitate and just leaned forward into Mike and let himself be hugged. Mike pressed Will to his chest tight and held him there. He smelled like vanilla soap and boy and the woods, and Will wanted to let himself stay there forever. Mike lifted a warm hand to Will's hair and stroked it softly.

Will's heart pounded in his chest.

"You know," Mike murmured, "you can talk to me, right?"

Will's heart ached.

"About anything," he went on.

Will's heart ached so, so much.

"You'll always be my best friend."

Will hoped so. (He didn't dare dream they could be anything else.)

And then Mike lifted Will's head up a little and placed a soft kiss on his temple.

"Anyway, I'll clean up my cheek and then we can go and play cards in the living room or something, or if Jonathan comes back we can bug him to take us to town for ice cream," declared Mike, detangling himself from Will.

Will just nodded, trying not to look as though his stomach was swooping wildly and his face felt hot and flushed.

"Yeah, that sounds like a good idea," he agreed, a little breathlessly.

And as Mike stepped up to the mirror and examined his wound (his freckled cheeks looked suspiciously pink too), he made eye contact with Will standing behind him through the mirror. They both held back identical smiles.

Things would be alright, Will decided.

Author's Note:

comments and kudos are appreciated very much <3